RESOLUTION NO. 6620

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA DESGINATING 1120 BUENA VISTA STREET (THE KNOX-MERWIN-PORTER HOUSE) AS AN OFFICIAL SOUTH PASADENA HISTORIC LANDMARK (LANDMARK NO. 42)

WHEREAS, Section 2.73A-14 of the South Pasadena Municipal Code Ordinance #2004 (commonly known as the "Cultural Heritage Ordinance") authorized the Cultural Heritage Commission ("the Commission") to recommend to the City Council the designation of appropriate properties as landmarks; and

WHEREAS, a duly prepared nomination form has been prepared and submitted by the property owners to register the property located at 1120 Buena Vista Street as a South Pasadena Historic Landmark; and

WHEREAS, the research and documentation prepared and submitted by Pam Clausen and her mother Janet Jackson amply demonstrates the qualifications of the property for landmark designation; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has complied with the applicable provisions of Subsection (A) (3) ["Designation Procedure"] of the above Ordinance Section in that it visited the site, mailed notices, held a duly noticed public hearing, and received public comment: and

WHEREAS, the Commission made findings of fact pursuant to Subsection (A) (2) ["Designation Procedure"] of the above Ordinance Section, as follows:

(a) *Its character, interest or value as a part of the heritage of the community.*

- **Beginning with its standing as one of the oldest buildings in the city, the Knox-Merwin House has stood witness to almost its entire Post-Colonial heritage. This residence and its prominent occupants have been a vital part of the city's history and legacy for 125 years. It began before Raymond, before Cawston, before incorporation...from subdivision of the San Gabriel Orange Grove Association lands right up to the present.**

- **Reflecting the tastes of its socially and culturally prominent owners over its first fifty years, the house is a virtual time capsule of interior architectural styles from the 1870s through the 1920s. Simple door and window trim grace the oldest rooms; Fancier antebellum decorative woodwork adorns**

the parlor and dining room, probably added by Reverend Merwin; a Bachelder fireplace and Craftsman features in the living room designed by G. Lawrence Stimson well reflect 20th Century back-to-nature design philosophies.

(b) *Its association with persons who significantly contributed to local culture and development of the area and State of California.*

- **Before the "women's movement," before women's suffrage, before either Pasadena or South Pasadena were even contemplated, Dr. Eliza Knox moved here, set up practice and built her home. A more apt symbol and forerunner of the continuing struggle for recognition by today's women could hardly be imagined.**
- **Reverend R.N.C Farnsworth, a resident during the structure's years as a parsonage, was a nationally known author and religious leader.Reverend Merwin, former missionary to Chile, was a significant figure in local cultural and religious affairs for many years. He was a close friend of Charles and Henry Greene and for a time served as the first president of the Twilight Club which he founded with the Greenes. The organization was dedicated to advancement of artistic and cultural endeavors.**
- **Continuing the South Pasadena "Who's Who" list of prominent owner/residents from 1875 through the mid-1920s were State Senator Egbert Gates who purchased the property in 1909.**
- **Maude Whitlock, whose sister married Don Carlos Porter, son of San Gabriel Orange Grove Association co-founder A.O. Porter, purchased the house in 1927. Don Carlos Porter was a prominent Los Angeles attorney. The Porters donated land for the first school in South Pasadena and were one of the young city's most influential families. Don Carlos, by then a widower, married his sister-in-law in 1931 and he and his son, A.O. Porter II, moved into this house at 1120 Buena Vista. The third generation South Pasadena Porter lived here during much of his distinguished public career, capped by election as South Pasadena Mayor in 1940.**

(c) *Its exemplification of a particular architectural style of an era of history of the city.*

- **The Knox-Merwin House is a beautiful example of how a Victorian era Farmhouse Style residence can grow, age gracefully, adapt to and incorporate changing design tastes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.**

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(d) *Its exemplification of the best remaining architectural type in a neighborhood.*

- **The house is the only Victorian era Farmhouse Style residence in the Prospect/Buena Vista neighborhood. In an area that includes fine examples of dozens of other architectural periods and types, the Knox-Merwin farmhouse, with its sweeping, park-like front lawn, is a significant, distinctive and highly visible neighborhood feature.**

WHEREAS, based on the evidence presented in the application materials, the designation being categorically exempt, sub-committee research, on-site inspection and public testimony, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to recommend designation of this property on June 15, 2000 and forwarded the recommendation to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the City Council held a public hearing on the proposed designation on July 19, 2000 and received public testimony.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved the South Pasadena City Council designates the Know-Merwin-Porter House at 1120 Buena Vista Street as South Pasadena Historic Landmark No. 42, based on the above-mentioned findings.

PASSED, APPROVED and **ADOPTED** this 19th day of July, 2000

Dorothy M. Cohen
DOROTHY M. COHEN, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Sonja M. Hauer
for JEANNINE A. GREGORY, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the City Council of the City of South Pasadena at a regular scheduled meeting held on the 19th of July, 2000.

AYES: Knapp, Rose, Zee and Mayor Cohen
NOES: None
ABSENT: Saeta

Sonja M. Hauer
for JEANNINE A. GREGORY, CITY CLERK